

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) A polishing apparatus comprising:

at least three load-unload stages each for placing a wafer cassette which accommodates a plurality of wafers;

a robot which moves along said at least three load-unload stages, for accessing said respective wafer cassettes;

a polishing unit for polishing a plurality of wafers simultaneously;

a cleaning and drying unit for cleaning and drying ~~a~~ the polished wafer; and

a dummy wafer station for holding at least one dummy wafer or at least one quality control wafer ~~wherein said robot and said cleaning and drying unit are disposed between said load-unload stages and said polishing unit.~~

Claim 2 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said robot is movable along a rail disposed in said polishing apparatus.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said polishing unit comprises a plurality of top rings each for holding a respective ~~the~~ wafer ~~respectively~~ during polishing operation.

Claim 4 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said polishing unit comprises a plurality of polishing tables each for providing a polishing surface for the wafer.

Claim 5 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising another robot for transferring the wafer in a space between said load-unload stages and said polishing unit.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended) A polishing apparatus ~~according to claim 1, further~~ comprising:
at least three load-unload stages each for placing a wafer cassette which accommodates a plurality of wafers;

a robot which moves along said at least three load-unload stages, for accessing said respective wafer cassettes;

a polishing unit for polishing a plurality of wafers simultaneously;

a cleaning and drying unit for cleaning and drying a polished wafer; and

a transporter for handling a plurality of the wafers at one time, and for moving a ~~the~~ wafer to a preferable position below a top ring which holds the wafer during polishing operation;

wherein said robot and said cleaning and drying unit are disposed between said load-unload stages and said polishing unit.

Claim 7 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said transporter transfers the wafers to a plurality of the top rings.

Claim 8 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising a pusher disposed below said transporter for elevating the wafer on said transporter to the top ring.

Claim 9 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said cleaning and drying unit comprises at least three cleaning apparatuses for cleaning the wafer.

Claim 10 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said load-unload stages, said robot, said cleaning and drying unit, and said polishing unit are disposed in order from one side of the polishing apparatus.

Claim 11 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a partition is provided between said polishing unit and said cleaning and drying unit.

Claim 12 (Original) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a partition is provided between said load-unload stages and said cleaning and drying unit.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended) A polishing apparatus comprising: according to claim 12,
at least three load-unload stages each for placing a wafer cassette which accommodates a
plurality of wafers;

a robot which moves along said at least three load-unload stages for accessing said respective
wafer cassettes;

a polishing unit for polishing a plurality of wafers simultaneously;

a cleaning and drying unit for cleaning and drying a polished wafer; and

a partition provided between said load-unload stages and said cleaning and drying unit,

wherein said robot and said cleaning and drying unit are disposed between said load-unload
stages and said polishing unit, and

wherein a pressure of a space in which said cleaning and drying unit is disposed is adjusted
so as to be lower than a pressure of a space in which said load-unload stages are disposed.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended) A polishing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein a pressure
of a space in which said polishing unit is disposed is adjusted so as to be lower than a pressure of the
a space in which said cleaning and drying unit is disposed.

Claim 15 (New) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said dummy wafer station
holds said at least one dummy wafer, and said at least one dummy wafer is a substrate for use in
stabilizing a polishing cloth in said polishing unit before a product wafer is processed.

Claim 16 (New) A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said dummy wafer station
holds said at least one quality control wafer, and said at least one quality control wafer is a substrate
for confirming the status or condition of said polishing apparatus.

Claim 17 (New) A polishing apparatus of claim 1, wherein said dummy wafer station comprises
a substrate detection sensor for confirming the presence of a substrate in said dummy wafer station.

Claim 18 (New) A polishing apparatus of claim 1, wherein said dummy wafer station is disposed below said load-unload stages.